

Britain, Brexit and the railway – what next?



SIMON WELLER on what leaving the EU means for rail
GREGOR GALL reveals the truth about One Nation Tories
MARZ COLOMBINI enjoys TRB and cricket at Tolfest

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Mick Whelan mans the ASLEF stall at Tolpuddle

We could be in for a long battle

WE ARE used to hearing how politics is boring, the young are not engaged, and there is no difference between the parties; and, at this time of year, the papers and blogs are usually full of silly season stories. Not this year! It is quite clear that, despite having years to prepare for a referendum they called to try and solve their own internal problems, the Tories had not prepared for the possibility of a vote for Brexit. Given the traditional leanings of the party, this is a surprise; but, in an era of infighting, Michael Gove, arch-Brexiteer, is sidelined as Boris Johnson, David Davis and Liam Fox spend more time empire building than getting on with it. There was always going to be a period of uncertainty, post-referendum, but this fumbling and incompetence does not help.

As for the Labour Party, we have a leader that the CLPs and hundreds of thousands of members, but not the PLP, want. Wouldn't it be strange to have a popular leader with policies with which voters identify? Not according to some in the PLP, and NEC, who think, 'Let's try and force out a leader who was the overwhelming choice of 2015,' under a system they wanted but now seek to gerrymander. I can understand a cut-off point for administrative purposes – maybe a month – but six months to exclude 130,000 members, and then opening it up for two days to those prepared to pay £25, is the worst form of hypocrisy. Kudos to those who challenged this shabby decision, both for their perseverance and their passion for representative democracy.

We have been out campaigning as the annual RPI figure for July is released in August and tells us how much fares will increase in January. The public have had enough. Many have to travel further due to the high cost of housing, transport poverty remains a real issue, and it's you, and those on the front line, who take the abuse for an increasingly overcrowded and, in many cases, poor experience.

Imposition of rosters in abrogation of all our agreements is reflected in our ballot for industrial action in District 1; what will be next? Colas IM told us Network Rail had told them not to recruit; we checked and that is untrue. This is another disingenuous company which wants to hurt its employees. It could be a long battle...

Yours fraternally

Mick Whelan, general secretary



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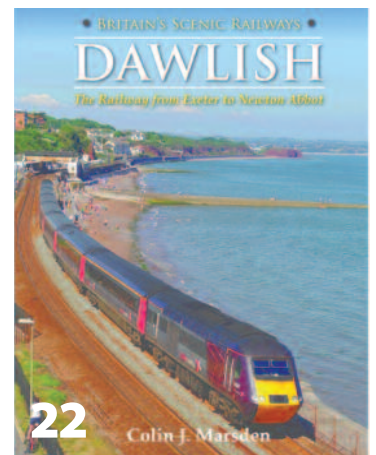
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Colas – hell bent on not talking to us

OUR DISPUTE with Colas continues as the company drags its heels over pay, driver establishments, the abrogation of agreements and associated safety concerns. The company has proved reluctant to get round the table and resolve the problems.

'It would appear that Colas is hell bent on avoiding any discussion with ASLEF on these issues and is determined to use disciplinary procedures in an inflammatory manner to target drivers and representatives,' said GS Mick Whelan. 'When employers act with such intransigence, and aggression, we are confronted with the harsh choice of either putting up with it, or using industrial action to get them back around the table to negotiate, and ensure justice for our members.'

Members voted overwhelmingly in June in favour of taking industrial action: 82.9% voted for strike action and 91.4% voted to take part in industrial action short of a strike.

'The ballot was a result of not being able to



ASLEF members at Colas Rail voted overwhelmingly in favour of industrial action

QUOTE...

'There's a small group willing to destroy our party just to remove Jeremy Corbyn.' – John McDonnell

...UNQUOTE

reach agreement, as we have done with other operators, on payment of average earnings whilst on leave; the refusal of Colas to recruit or replace drivers on IM contracts; and concerns over the abrogation of working agreements and related safety issues,' said DO6 Dicky Fisher. 'The result gave our executive committee a very strong mandate to put in place the cessation of overtime working, the initial 24 hour strike, and to later advise of further dates.'

We have, now, received an acceptable proposal over holiday pay, which is awaiting implementation. But the other issues,

together with our annual pay submission, are still outstanding. 'Throughout this dispute we have reiterated our willingness to meet Colas to resolve these issues,' said Dicky. 'Colas has, so far, failed to respond to our offer of a meeting.'

Mick added: 'Colas are pursuing an openly aggressive attitude to discipline; there are now three drivers suspended on allegations of gross misconduct, including the company council secretary.'

● A meeting for members with the EC president, company council and lead officer in attendance has been arranged for 1pm on Saturday 27 August at the Brunswick, 1 Railway Terrace, Derby.

Passengers' Southern discomfort

Angry passengers piled more pressure on under-fire Southern boss Charles Horton at a meet the managers session in Victoria station. The GTR CEO said commuters had been 'very honest' when expressing their frustration with the dismal service – the delays, cancellations and reduced timetable – his company provides.

Rona Hunnisett, a charity worker who commutes from Brighton to London,

complained that when she asked for 'a definitive time' that services would improve, she received only 'waffle and evasion.' She added: 'I'm sick of the constant excuses. I pay Southern £4,000 a year for a service I don't get.'

Paul Maynard, the new Rail Minister, has said the current level of service the TOC is offering is unacceptable.

And Caroline Lucas, Green Party MP for Brighton Pavilion,

said: 'The level of disruption has been immense, and enough is enough. The way in which the strike has been handled demonstrates, yet again, that GTR is not fit for purpose. It's time to strip them of this franchise and put this rail line in public hands. The government has the power to listen to passengers, remove the franchise from GTR, freeze fares and compensate people fairly.'



On track with ASLEF



Mick and Marz at Osa's Waterloo branch diversity day.

Jez we will

ASLEF, led by DO7 Brian Corbett and branch secretary Bernard Kennedy, in action at the Jeremy Corbyn rally in Bristol in August

TWEETS OF THE MONTH

 **Inheritance tax: Duke of Westminster's £9bn estate is held in trust so will not pay billions in tax.**
Aditya Chakraborty

 **How the grotesquely unfair 'something for nothing' inheritance culture of the super rich robs Britain.**
Kevin Maguire

 **Anyone willing to sink so low, so often, should never be allowed to serve as our Commander-in-Chief.**
Hillary Clinton

CLASS CALL

The first of ten new dual-mode Class 88 locomotives has been delivered to Direct Rail Services by Stadler from its factory at Valencia in Spain. The company says the 88 offers 'a step change for the delivery of freight and passenger services' in the UK.



'The relaunch of the Left Book Club is a terrific and timely idea, and will give intellectual ballast to the wave of political change sweeping Britain and beyond, encouraging informed and compassionate debate. The works will open minds and inspire. I support the new LBC wholeheartedly.'

Jeremy Corbyn

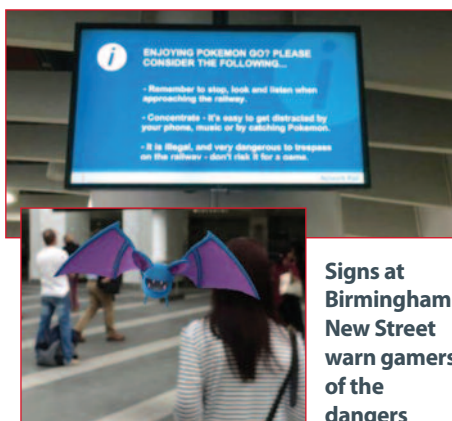
LEFT BOOK CLUB

MIND THE GAP

New figures reveal the Conservative government is spending more on Crossrail in London than on all projects in northern England. The DfT will spend just £280 per person in the north over the next four years compared with £1,870 per person in London.

Gamers play Pokemon Go on railway tracks

NETWORK RAIL has warned Nintendo that people playing its popular online game Pokemon Go – which involves finding virtual characters in real locations – are walking on railway tracks at Birmingham New Street station. Electronic signs warn gamers: 'It's easy to get distracted by catching Pokemon. It is illegal, and very dangerous, to trespass on the railway – don't risk it for a game.' Lisbeth Fromling, chief health and safety officer at NR, said: 'We



Signs at Birmingham New Street warn gamers of the dangers

have safety concerns about the locations of certain PokeGyms, where gamers go to train their virtual monsters, and PokeStops, which players visit to collect items in the game,

and are too close to the working railway. We have shared our concerns with the app developers and Nintendo in the hope that we can work together to make the app safer.'

DfT PPS speaks out against HS2

Victoria Prentis, the new Parliamentary Private Secretary to junior ministers at the Department for Transport, has come out against HS2. The Conservative MP for Banbury, through which the proposed high speed rail route runs, said: 'While I recognise the importance of investment in our transport network, I am strongly opposed to the building of HS2. I will continue to oppose it in principle, as I do not think it represents value for money for taxpayers, and the environmental costs are too high.'

QUOTE...

'The Conservative Party must double its membership – it's time for Maymentum.' – **Jake Berry**, Tory MP for Rossendale & Darwen in *Conservative Home*

...UNQUOTE

TOCS HIDE CHEAP FARES

Millions of passengers are being overcharged as the privatised train operating companies hide cheap fares in a bid to exploit customers and drive up profits, according to an investigation in *The Times*.

CONFERENCES & RALLIES

The **Burston strike school rally** is at Crown Green, Burston, near Diss, Norfolk, on Sunday 4 September. The **Trades Union Congress** is at the Brighton Centre from Sunday 11 to Wednesday 14 September. The **Labour Party conference** is at the BT convention centre in Liverpool from Sunday 25 to Wednesday 28 September. The **Battle of Cable Street** march is at Altab Ali Park, London E1, on Sunday 9 October. The **Scottish Trades Union Congress** is at the Macdonald Highlands hotel, Aviemore, from Monday 24 to Wednesday 26 April 2017. **ASLEF's annual assembly of delegates** is at the Marriott Royal Hotel, Bristol, from Monday 22 to Thursday 25 May.

500 CLUB: K Graham, with number 145, won the August draw, scooping the RMS prize money jackpot of £374.

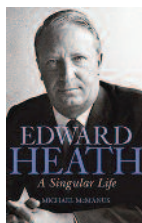
Off the rails



IAIN DALE, who presents the drive time show on LBC, and runs Biteback Publishing, was typically waspish about Theresa May's new line-up on Tim Montgomerie's website *Conservative Home*: 'Love the old rogue as I do, I and many others were left scratching our heads that John Hayes has survived yet another reshuffle. Better to have him pissing out than in? What other reason can there be? He's gone back to a job in the Department for Transport, where he was universally loathed in his previous stint there. Patrick McLoughlin, I am reliably informed, moved heaven and earth to get him moved out, so I do wonder how he and Chris Grayling will get on...'



PETER SNOW, the veteran broadcaster, didn't exactly cover himself in glory with *Trainspotting Live* on BBC4 in July. The programme turned out to be less than live – a front page splash in *The Sun* pointed out that ostensibly live footage of a Class 66 was actually an old clip posted on YouTube, bare winter trees and all, five months before – and all that time spent on gushing about how wonderful the Class 66 is showed – to our members who drive the old rattlers – how little he really knows.



EDWARD HEATH, according to a new biography by Michael Manus, was so unpopular with his own MPs that Timothy Kitson, his PPS, begged him to step outside Downing Street and buy colleagues a drink or two in the House of Commons. A few days later Kitson was delighted to see the Prime Minister in animated conversation with a prominent backbencher over a pint. Until he heard the PM pompously tell the unfortunate fellow, 'That was a bloody awful speech you made today.'



SOUTHERN cancelled services from Wallington and Streatham Common to Victoria after graffiti was scrawled on carriages overnight. Fed up commuters joked on social media that Southern Railways had been spray painted on the carriages, while others wondered why – and how much – graffiti would cause an entire train to be cancelled. One said, 'Does it say "Charlie Horton resign"?' referring to the troubled company's hapless chief executive.



ANDY HUDD, in his piece on Zimbabwe (*Journal*, August) revealed that when he and Brian Corbett visited ZARWU's head office he had a quick look at their collection of books in the boardroom – and spotted a copy of *The Lighted Flame* by Norman McKillop, presented by Ray Buckton. Here it is on the shelf!



DAVID CAMERON got a shout-out during Andy Murray's victory speech after the men's singles final at Wimbledon. Much to his chagrin the capacity crowd on centre court – most of whom vote Tory – promptly booed the soon to be ex-Prime Minister.

Ashes to ashes dust to dust

MICK HOLDER of ASLEF's health and safety department wants to know if ballast dust is a problem for freight drivers

SISTER unions are raising concerns with employers about the risk to their members who are exposed to potentially unhealthy ballast dust on the railway – and we'd like to know whether this is a problem for the drivers of ballast trains, too.

Ballast is made up of broken rock and can contain high levels of silica dust which can – and does – become airborne and will be breathed in by anyone exposed to it. This is known as respirable dust which can cause



GBRf train with ballast on board

silicosis, a progressive and debilitating lung disease, and cancer. As well as this the dust can seriously irritate the nose, eyes, and skin.

All permanent way workers laying ballast will be exposed to airborne silica dust but it need not happen as dust can be controlled by damping down and there are high efficiency vacuum cleaners which will extract the dust. All of this is well known but it appears some railway employers need encouragement to

put these controls in place.

The ORR has made the reduction of worker exposure to silica dust a priority of its occupational health programme and is saying the right things to employers. But what about ASLEF members driving ballast trains?

On the surface it doesn't look like being a massive problem for drivers as they are likely to be well away from any dust in a sealed train cab. However, we know how badly some windows and door seals fit on some locos (eg Class 66s), and how dirty some of the cab interiors get, so it could be an issue the union should take up with employers, but we don't know for sure.

We are therefore asking any ballast drivers who have had a dust up working ballast to let us know in the health and safety department at head office. Please contact either Dave Bennett dbennett@aslef.org.uk or Mick Holder holderm@aslef.org.uk if you have anything to tell so we can report on it.

Mafia in awe of TOCs

This wickedly funny 'story' – Mafia in awe of UK train companies – appeared on the satirical website *The Daily Mash* last month:

A group of New York mobsters has visited Britain to get tips on exploitation from train companies. The gangsters expressed their admiration for the way trains operate in the UK, which they consider to be the most beautiful racket ever devised. Wise guy Tommy Logan said: 'One day it's £75 for an off-peak return. The next day – boom – it's double the price! Nobody asks any questions. They got this other shit like super off-peak just to make it real confusing. Poor schmucks don't know what ticket to buy so they just get the most



Don Corleone pulling the strings

expensive one, it's nice. Real nice. Season commuter tickets are the sweetest part of the operation because there's no other way for people to get to work. Plus they got this family saver grift that's more expensive than the regular fare. All this and they don't even bother to fix the toilets. You know the best thing? If they want more money, they just ask the

government. Cook up some bullshit about vital track

maintenance then blow the loot on women and horses.'

QUOTE...

'Remainers sought to rebut the case for Leave by insisting that the notorious £350m was bogus. But, though correct, those Remainers were responding in the wrong idiom. Leave was channelling a howl of pain from those who felt that 21st century life was passing them by. Remain replied as if they were taking part in a policy seminar.' – Jonathan Freedland in *The Guardian*

...UNQUOTE

RAIL FARES – AND DIVIDENDS FOR SHAREHOLDERS – SOAR

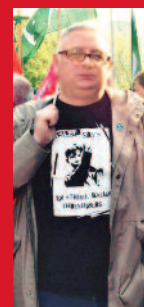
Rail fares have increased at double the rate of wages since 2010, according new analysis by the TUC. It reveals that fares have risen by 25% in the last six years, while average weekly earnings have grown by 12%. Dividends paid to shareholders of the privatised train companies soared by 21% in the last year to £222 million. 'Passengers are paying ever more and getting even less,' said TUC GS Frances O'Grady. 'Enough is enough. It's time for rail services to be publicly owned.'

£1BN METRO FOR NORTH-EAST

The North East Combined Authority has approved a metro and local rail strategy with £1 billion of planned investment in the Tyne & Wear Metro and main line passenger services over the next 20 years. Nexus, the regional transport agency which owns 78km of dedicated Metro infrastructure around Newcastle-upon-Tyne, is due to submit a detailed business case by the end of the year. NECA notes that there are several 'disused or little-used rail routes that thread across Northumberland, Durham and Tyne & Wear' which have the potential to be revived 'for local passenger services'. These provide, it says, a 'starting point for detailed evaluation' of Metro extensions, either using dedicated infrastructure or shared running with regional trains.

BOMBARDIER BOOST

Bombardier has been awarded a £1 billion contract as part of what the DfT calls 'the biggest investment in the railways since the Victorian era.' The contract is for 660 state of the art carriages to be built at the firm's factory in Derby for service with Abellio East Anglia, which has been awarded a new franchise running from October 2016 until 2025. A further 400 new carriages for the franchise are to be supplied by Stadler Rail of Switzerland.



Marz Colombini models ASLEF's Kes tee-shirt – with a Harvey Smith to the Tories' anti-Trade Union Bill – based on the iconic image from the famous Ken Loach film. £10 (inc p&p); email admin@aslef.org.uk or visit our online shop at www.aslef.org.uk

Wilko – over and out?

PETER WILKINSON, the controversial civil servant who earns £265,000 a year as director of rail passenger services at the Department for Transport, and who created a storm earlier this year when he described train drivers as 'muppets', and said he was determined to force us out on strike, has been told he should resign because of a conflict of interest.

The think tank 38 Degrees says: 'Peter Wilkinson is also co-owner of Renaissance

Trains, a company "established in 1997 to promote the formation of private sector companies operating in the UK rail sector". The financial benefits of shareholders in private train operators is at odds with the provision of a safe, reliable train service for the benefit of paying customers.

'Wilkinson's personal interest in making money out of Britain's transport infrastructure jeopardises the good running of a service crucial to the nation,



Peter Wilkinson of the DfT is under fire for a conflict of interest

threatens the livelihoods and well-being of those employees who have subscribed to join a trade union, and places profits ahead of passengers.'

FREIGHT TRAIN SHOT AT

A driver was shaken, but not hurt, when his freight train was shot at causing the windscreen to smash. The attack happened near a railway bridge in Swindon Road, Cheltenham, on 25 July. British Transport Police says it believes the attack was carried out by a high powered air rifle or slingshot. Gloucestershire Police sent armed officers to the scene. A spokesman said: 'We were called by BTP reporting the driver's window of a train had been shot at and completely shattered.'

QUOTE...

'All the evidence suggests staff deter crime.' – **Stephen Joseph, Campaign for Better Transport**

...UNQUOTE



Andrew Dickinson, a Northern Rail driver, has picked up a Serco Pulse award for trying to save a man's life at Meadowhall station, Sheffield. Andrew spotted the man, who had collapsed on the platform after a heart attack, as he pulled into the station. 'People were stepping over him to board the train so I left the train to call the paramedics and offer assistance.' Sadly, the man died. But Northern MD Alex Hynes praised Andrew's quick thinking and selfless behaviour.



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Show me the way to go home

AOIFE FINNERAN of the RSSB wants your help with a new study about route knowledge in the rail industry

The Rail Safety and Standards Board has launched a route knowledge project to investigate how drivers can best acquire and maintain route knowledge. We are interested in the route information provided to drivers and how route knowledge competencies are developed.

We are aiming to develop a 'route story' approach, which is a route-specific summary of route knowledge cues along a route and how they are used for

specific tasks (eg controlling train speed, emergency events, and station duties). The RSSB understands the importance of

engaging with you, the end user, and in the coming months we plan to talk to drivers to get your input in developing the route story approach. So look out for us getting in touch with you, through your employer, and, if you're interested,

please get involved in the driver interviews we will be running. If you have any questions, please contact our researchers Huw Gibson and Aoife Finneran at the RSSB. You can email them via humanfactors@rssb.co.uk



EC president Tosh McDonald addresses supporters of Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn at a rally in London against (hashtag Labour coup) the right-wing plotters of Progress and the PLP.



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Shooter's D-train sent to Coventry

LONDON MIDLAND is to run a Vivarail D-train prototype (*Journal*, July) in passenger service on the Coventry to Nuneaton line. The three car train is being leased to a consortium, led by the West Midlands Combined Authority, for a year.

Adrian Shooter, Vivarail's chief executive, said: 'I'm delighted the Class 230 will soon be running on the main line carrying passengers. We will be supplying a train of the highest quality with three carriages fitted out in a range of designs to get valuable feedback on what passengers want. The two driving cars will retain their original crowd-busting layout whilst the middle car will showcase different seating and table arrangements. Our aim is to gain direct thoughts from the public about what suits their needs which we will be important in discussions with future operators.'



The prototype D-train on test at Quinton

We are proud to be based in the West Midlands and pleased to see our train running on a local route.'

Roger Lawrence, transport lead on the WMCA, said: 'The D-train is an innovative proposition which could help us get around the UK shortage of suitable diesel trains to run

QUOTE...

'Too many Labour politicians look like they'd be itching to use their hand sanitiser as soon as they touch an ordinary person.' – **Chelley Ryan**, *Morning Star*

...UNQUOTE

on this line.' Councillor David Welsh added: 'Anything we can do to boost the number of people that can travel to the Ricoh by train has got to be good news.'

Labour all his life

A big ASLEF contingent led by GS Mick Whelan and EC president Tosh McDonald paid tribute to Dave Hopper, secretary of the Durham Miners' Association, who died unexpectedly on 16 July, at his funeral in Durham on 29 July.

'Davey was elected general secretary of the Durham area NUM in 1985 and led the union through the very difficult years after the bitter miners' strike of



Tosh, Davey and Mick at AAD in Brighton two years ago

1984/85 and the closure of the Durham coalfield,' said Mick. 'He was an inspirational leader who held firm to his deeply felt socialist principles all his life.'

Just a week before he died Davey presided over the

132nd Miners' Gala – the 31st on his tour of duty – which attracted the biggest crowd in 60 years. 'That achievement, as well as the Big Meetings to come, are his legacy to the labour movement,' said Mick.

TRAINLINE PUSHES FOR SUPER PEAK PRICES WITH BIG BROTHER SNOOP APP

Trainline – the online rail ticket retailer which trades as thetrainline.com – is developing technology, using location tracking data from customers, to push up prices for passengers on busy services. Clare Gilmartin, the company's chief executive, said the website will use GPS installed in its app to update ticket prices. 'We're collecting information from everyone,' she admitted. 'We want to help train operators manage their yield more effectively.' 'Manage their yield means push up prices and make more profit,' said Lianna Etkind of the Campaign for Better Transport. 'We object to any move towards super peak pricing. Fares are already too high and creating a peak time travel premium discriminates against people who have less discretion over when they travel.'

COMPANIES ON NOTICE

ASLEF has written to all TOCs and FOCs saying the union will not tolerate members being disciplined for carrying out their health & safety responsibilities.

GAME ON FOR SOUTHERN FAILWAYS

Web developers frustrated by continuing delays on Southern Railways – the company dubbed Southern Failways by long-suffering passengers – have used their ordeal as inspiration for a new online game which ridicules the TOC and its 'rubbish' management. Tens of thousands of angry commuters have downloaded RamJam's game Southern Rail Tycoon – the aim of which is to stop guards from boarding trains so services are cancelled and 'boom' profits are picked up from passengers. Once a sufficient number of train guards board a train and a delayed service eventually departs, the player loses the game. A Southern Rail spokesman said: 'It's nothing to laugh at.'

RUSSIAN ROULETTE

A woman was decapitated by a speeding train while having sex just inches from the Trans-Siberian railway line, according to Russian media. Her lover survived the dangerous romp near Zaudinskaya station in the suburbs of Ulan-Ude in Buryatia in eastern Siberia. 'The woman was on top of her partner and, when she heard an approaching train, she started to stand up,' said a spokesman for Russian Railways. 'Right then, the speeding train tore off her head. Had she remained in her previous position, she would have stayed alive. The man survived.' The couple, who have not been named, had been on a vodka binge.

NOW TORY MP SLAMS SOUTHEASTERN

Greg Clark, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and Conservative MP for Tunbridge Wells, has had a pop at the TOC that serves his constituency after it was rated the worst in the country for value for money in the National Rail Passenger Survey. 'Southeastern's low score is no surprise,' he said. 'In return for paying high fares I, and my constituents, expect to be able to get a seat, travel in a pleasant environment, and arrive on time. Southeastern's franchise is up for review and should not be renewed without a guarantee of significant improvements.'

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BREXIT, BRITAIN AND THE RAILWAY – WHERE NEXT?



On Thursday 23 June Britain decided by 17,410,742 votes to 16,141,241 to leave the European Union which we joined, when it was the European Economic Community, in 1973. But what will Brexit mean for Britain's railways? ASLEF's assistant general secretary SIMON WELLER examines what it might mean for us

NOT WANTING to sound too fatalistic but the answer to that question – where next for the railway after Brexit? – is, now, quite simply, 'No one knows.' It all hinges on the terms of the negotiated exit. Theresa May, who became Prime Minister when David Cameron stepped down after losing the referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union, has thrown everything up in the air by putting in charge of the negotiations the three wise monkeys – Tory Brexiters Michael Gove, David Davis and Liam Fox.

There may be some smart(ish) internal Tory or domestic politics going on by putting them in charge (as well as throwing Boris Johnson into the mix as Foreign Secretary), but this may not result in the best deal for Britain's workers – shock!

The amount of legislation that needs decoupling from various EU treaties and directives is significant in both quantity and content. Whilst the Tories are keen to be free from what they see as the shackles of bureaucracy and over-regulation (environmental regulations, social chapter, TUPE, the working time directive, and the like) they are equally keen to retain access to the single market, free movement of labour and competitive tendering.

PLAYING RUSSIAN ROULETTE

With the Westminster elite looking like a sweating prisoner of war forced to play Russian roulette no-one seems to want to pull the trigger on Article 50 (the mechanism to start the process of leaving the EU). The government dithering on the decision puts everything in doubt.

The leave campaign's commitments to protect EU levels of funding in some regions, and for some sectors, notably agriculture, will mean further cuts in other areas. This could affect future funding levels of the railways because

despite being privatised the rail industry still receives huge subsidies from the state.

It is unlikely that we will see any fundamental change to the structure of the railways because of Brexit. The privatisation of our railways predates a lot of EU legislation and, as such, is in a significantly more advanced stage of liberalisation. Leaving the EU could give us an opportunity to vertically integrate the system again and to do away with the artificial division between operation and infrastructure. It does mean our pensions are free from the spectre of the EU Solvency II directive.

Another area where we are unlikely to see any change is standards or, more specifically, technical specifications for interoperability. As rail equipment manufacturers want as wide a market as possible, anything sold in the EU will still need to adhere to those TSIs so anything a UK rail operator buys or sells will, in all likelihood, comply with EU TSIs, now and in the future.

Currently European rail regulations do not allow Network Rail to discriminate between operators in the way it sets access charges. They could, post-Brexit, apply differing pricing regimes, which would allow subsidy for freight operators or even price open access off the railways. My fear is we are likely to see the reverse, especially given the current government's love of the passenger market in rail and, if I were to be cynical for a moment, the level of influence the road haulage lobby has at the Department for Transport.

However, all this is pure speculation, as no one knows what form Brexit will take.

THE NORWEGIAN MODEL

Norway is a member of the European Economic Area and has access to the single market. The downside of that is they have 75% of EU laws and regulations (including all the railway related ones as well as free movement) but have no vote or say in Brussels or Strasbourg, and still pay a significant contribution to the EU.

THE SWISS MODEL

Switzerland has some, but not full, access to the single market, is not member of the EEA but instead is party to the European Free Trade Agreement. They still pay a contribution and



Theresa May's three wise monkeys – Michael Gove, David Davis – are in charge of negotiating the terms of Brexit



have to implement some, but not all, EU laws, and free movement still applies. There is a complex arrangement of bilateral treaties governing trade and services between Switzerland and the EU single market.

THE CANADIAN MODEL

Canada, that well-known European nation, is just finalising a Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement with the EU. This would open some aspects of Canadian markets to EU member states in return for some access to the single European market but, again, the focus is on trade, not social standards.

POUND OF FLESH

Whichever road Gove, Davis and Fox take us down one thing is clear – the EU will want its pound of flesh and any deal the monkeys do will

D THE NEXT?



David Cameron, Liam Fox and David
Brexit's exit from Europe



Where do we stand
with the ETDL as Britain
heads for the exit?

A licence to create a more flexible labour market

SIMON WELLER looks at the future of the European train drivers' licence directive

THERE has been much discussion on the implementation – or not – of the revised European train drivers' licence directive. To be frank, it is difficult to say as it all depends on the terms of Brexit. If we were to go down the Norwegian model or the Swiss model it would still apply and, even if we didn't, it could take two years to achieve exit so the directive would be implemented in that time anyway. Whatever form Brexit takes it will have the European single market at its core and the quid pro quo for that will be the free movement of capital and labour. Even by the EU's own admission, the EU licence was designed to 'create a more flexible labour market for the [train] drivers themselves'; in other words, to create competition for jobs, and to drive down costs. My instinct is that the government will not be dropping that, no matter all their rhetoric about 'taking back our country'.

What does the revised licence mean in practice?

Firstly, it belongs to the driver, not the company. The licence is issued by the national safety authority – in our case the RSSB – and while it may be done via your company for ease of administration it is not for the company to decline or revoke a licence. Therefore, those driver managers scuttling around some depots gleefully telling drivers they will not be getting one are in for a nasty shock when they find out it is not in their gift to do that.

The licence confirms that a driver meets minimum requirements for medical and psychological fitness, basic education and general professional skills.

The employer issues the accompanying certificate and it details the specific competencies of the driver (routes, traction, etc). If a driver transfers between companies, the employer has to provide a copy to allow the driver to demonstrate previous competencies to any future employer.

Medical standards have changed and examinations have increased in

frequency. In fact, the medical standards have been relaxed slightly, mostly in regard with eyesight, but there is a slightly stricter requirement to have binocular vision, ie sight in both eyes. The frequency increase from five to three yearly is supported by the trade unions involved in the consultation exercise (including ASLEF) conducted by the European Railway Agency. It is important that medicals are utilised as a way to catch potential problems early. There is also a duty on us to ensure everyone entrusted with operating on the railway is fully fit.

When the TDLD comes into force from 29 October 2018 restricted drivers who do not work on the open network (say, only on a depot) should see no change as they do not come under the TDLD. The ORR has agreed that, in certain circumstances, medically restricted drivers will not need to hold these train driver licences when carrying out limited operations on the main line railway but we are still waiting final confirmation from them.

be for the benefit of the markets and business, not the workers.

They were keen to talk about sovereignty, and our right to self-determination, but not in terms of the rights of the millions who voted out because they have seen their communities hollowed out by unfettered globalisation. Their families' futures less secure, their industries flogged off to foreign owners, then closed and moved around the world chasing an extra pound of profit.

While we wait for the deals to be done our national infrastructure sits under a cloud of uncertainty. Will this Conservative government grasp the potential for us to have an integrated railway system of which we can all be proud, run for the benefit of the nation, or just continue punting it out to the highest bidder?

I have a good idea which one it will be.

Motorway sun coming up with the morning light

MARZ COLOMBINI, executive committee member for District 1, listens to Jeremy Corbyn and Tom Robinson, helps an ASLEF XI beat the TSSA at cricket, and drinks a pint or two of Brigadista during three days in deepest Dorsetshire

THE annual gathering in the usually sleepy Dorset village of Tolpuddle, celebrating the birth of modern day union activism in Britain, has long been one of the focal points of the trade union calendar. Many of our members have been regular attenders at the Tolpuddle Martyrs festival but it was, perhaps, the items adopted at successive AADs in 2009 and 2010, mandating an official ASLEF presence, that cemented the event as central to the ASLEF year. The three day festival each summer is a weekend of varied entertainment featuring stalls, political debate, comedy, live music and, of course, a procession through the village on Sunday. It continues to grow in popularity amongst our members and, despite several Tolpuddle regulars being unable to attend this year, we had another good turnout, with six of our eight districts represented.

'We raise the watchword, Liberty. We will, we will, we will be free!' – George Loveless

The ASLEF presence began to develop on Friday afternoon as our members started converging on the festival site to assist with the tasks; first of unloading the van and then erecting and



ASLEF in action at Tolpuddle. We were joined by Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, actress Maxine Peake, and TUC GS Frances O'Grady on the martyrs' march

stocking our gazebo in preparation for the next two days. Having completed what was clearly thirsty work refreshments were taken in the beer tent where, for some, it was a first opportunity to try Brigadista, a beer specially brewed to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Spanish Civil War which was on sale throughout the weekend. Friday evening's main fringe event was held by the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom.

Saturday saw the festival get into full swing with a broad range of political debate sessions and the usual open mic event. The popularity of our No DOO badges, balloons and tee-shirts became clear as a queue formed at the ASLEF gazebo. The onset of late afternoon and early

evening heralded the start of what is rapidly becoming something of a Tolpuddle institution as, at 17.00 exactly, in the GMB@Tolpuddle field, the meat hit the heat for the ASLEF/TSSA barbecue; a collaborative effort with food and drink shopped for by ASLEF, the TSSA and the GMB, and bread and cakes provided by – who else? – the Bakers, Food & Allied Workers' Union.

With the eating out of the way, the teams took the field for the annual ASLEF v TSSA sporting challenge, which has become an integral part of the Tolpuddle barbie. The pressure was squarely on the collective shoulders of the ASLEF team which, having won the wheelbarrow relay in 2014, and the football challenge in 2015, now faced our sister union in a cricket match in which victory would mean an unprecedented hat-trick. The weight of expectation hung heavy overhead but was duly despatched as our team once again secured a triumph.

'I was sold like a slave for £1. The convicts' names were written on slips of paper, the agent drew lots, each man at £1 per head.'
– James Hammett

The celebrations, though, came to an abrupt end as we heard the sad news from Durham, where many of us had celebrated the Miners' Gala only the week before, about the sudden death of Davey Hopper. Davey was a long-standing friend and comrade to ASLEF; a respectful toast was made in his honour, along with a period of reflection.

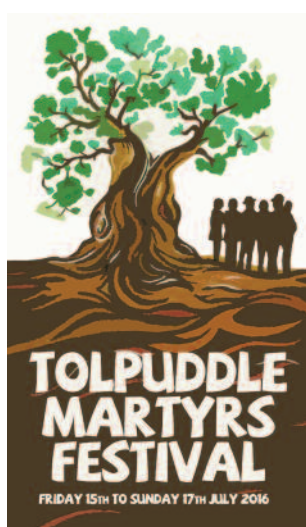
The curtain came down on day two back in the main field with the Tom Robinson Band playing a nostalgic set in the Martyrs Marquee. That old TRB favourite 2-4-6-8 *Motorway*, a Top 5 hit in 1977, had the crowd in the tent punching the air and singing along, but it was their 1978 political anthem *Glad To Be Gay* that got voices right across the festival site joining in.

Traditionally the highpoint of the festival is

Under the wild sycamore tree

AS THE sun rose on 24 February 1834, George Loveless, a Methodist lay preacher and farm labourer, kissed his wife Betsy and their three children goodbye and set off to work. He didn't see them again for three years. Because, as George left his cottage in the village of Tolpuddle in Dorset, he was served with a warrant for his arrest.

George was one of six agricultural labourers – the others included his brother James Loveless; James Hammett; James Brine; Thomas Standfield and his son John Standfield – who were charged by the authorities with making an illegal oath. Their real crime was forming a trade union to protest about their pay of six shillings a week.



The Tolpuddle Martyrs were sentenced at Dorchester Assizes to seven years' transportation for having the temerity to stand up for themselves – and for

standing together – to fight against poverty and austerity and to argue for better terms and conditions of employment.

That, of course, is what trades unions have been doing for the best part of two hundred years. And that is why the story of Tolpuddle and its martyrs is at the heart of the history of the trade union movement in Britain.

The boss class – the people who own the land, and the factories, and the big companies in this country – don't want us to stand together. They never have. And that's why unions are, once again, under attack by the Conservative government and the material interests – as Joseph Conrad describes them in his novel *Nostromo* – they represent.



the Sunday afternoon parade through the village, and while, as a spectacle, this year's parade easily matched those of previous years, with brass bands, dance troupes, singers and, of course, the usual array of colourful trade union banners, there can be little doubt that the main event this year was the speeches, from the Miami Five, Frances O'Grady, and Jeremy Corbyn.

'My Lord, we were uniting to preserve ourselves, our wives and our children, from utter degradation and starvation.'
– George Loveless

Frances paid a moving tribute to Jo Cox, Labour MP for Batley & Spen, to whom this year's festival was dedicated, reminding us of the words that are now inseparable from Jo's memory: 'We have far more in common than that which divides us.'

By this time what looked like record numbers of festivalgoers had congregated in the bottom field, with many spilling into the road below, as

the Labour leader prepared to address the crowd. The near silence that descended as Jeremy spoke was broken only as he concluded, by the loud applause and cheers that had marked his arrival earlier. Jeremy honoured Davey Hopper and recognised the struggles of the past and highlighted the fights we face in the present. We face an ever more ruthless Tory government and the importance of not only celebrating our history, but the value of understanding the past to try and help shape our future, has never been clearer.

This is exactly why so many of us make the trip to remember and celebrate the Tolpuddle Martyrs each year and why we look forward to seeing you there in 2017.

Thanks to everyone who attended and played a part in ASLEF's contribution to this year's festival. Special thanks to Carl Wainwright of Weymouth who represented ASLEF at the Tolpuddle planning committee in February and to EC vice-president Dave Calfe for driving the van down from London and back.

Cricket, lovely cricket

HAVING won the toss, and looking to capitalise on the best of the light, and what was clearly not a wicket to favour the bowler, TSSA captain Manuel Cortes elected to put his team in to bat. Their opening pair took to the field clearly intent on scoring some quick runs and setting us a hefty target. The TSSA plan was soon showing its flaws, though, as the ASLEF attack tore through their batting line-up with Marz Colombini only narrowly missing out on a hat-trick after taking two quick wickets including that of their promising president Mick Carney with a characteristically well-placed yorker.

The wicket of Vic Paulino fell as wicket keeper Mick Whelan showed why he is the safest pair of hands in the trade union movement, diving athletically to his right to make an acrobatic catch from the thinnest of thin edges. Debbie Reay followed up with another cheap quick fire

brace, leaving the opposition's batting order in tatters and Manuel Cortes with everything to do. But Manuel's visit to the crease was short-lived, losing his wicket to a Jon Coulton delivery and a questionable LBW decision from umpire Phil Devonport. What remained of the middle order and tail was left to the mercy of Ryan Howe who wasted little time in tidying things up; his four wicket haul included the scalps of Andy Bain, Melissa Heyward and Big Al Stoten, leaving TSSA all out for 36.

With the target set, ASLEF openers Brian Corbett and Marz Colombini started in a measured and disciplined fashion, trying patiently to craft some easy singles but the unco-operatively slow outfield proved too great an obstacle. The partnership was barely into double figures when Marz's patience failed and he called a single leading to his own run out.

Next up Jon Coulton faced the bowling of Mick Carney whose



The ASLEF first XI celebrates a famous victory

action suggested he would have been able to generate some spin on a more responsive wicket. Jon went from hero to villain in the same over, an impressive six followed two deliveries later by him hitting his own wicket. Hussein Ezzedine came in at number four and held up his end of the partnership until Sooty's wicket fell. Ryan Howe was next at the crease, an early six that cleared the GMB marquee serving as a clear statement of intent. The pairing of Ryan and Hussein soon settled and, with seven wickets in

hand, and ASLEF requiring four runs for victory, Ryan hoisted the ball beautifully and effortlessly over long on for a six that sealed our win.

ASLEF XI: Brian Corbett, Marz Colombini, Jon Coulton, Hussein Ezzedine, Ryan Howe, Debbie Reay, Mick Whelan, Zoe Calfe, Sean Dunne, Jacob Howe, Jamal Ajjane. **TSSA XI:** Wayne Geoghegan, Mick Carney, Manuel Cortes, Vic Paulino, Steve Roden, Andy Bain, John Morris, Melissa Heywood, Bridget, Jason Turvey, Big Al Stoten.



Getting rail workers up to speed with IT

ASLEF Education project worker GRAHAM CHESTERS reports on courses at Newcastle Central and King's Cross to improve drivers' IT skills

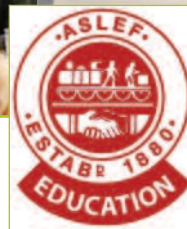
A SLEF's union learning reps have been working across the rail network setting up IT courses to help railway workers improve their IT skills (and get a qualification). New courses started recently at Newcastle Central – in partnership with the trade union education unit at Newcastle College – and King's Cross – with the College of Haringey, Enfield & North-East London – and are proving very popular.

There has been increasing demand for IT courses in the rail sector in recent years. New technologies are being introduced and many employees want to bring their IT skills up to speed. ULRs have noticed a growing demand among colleagues, following analysis of learning surveys, and from informal conversations with union members at branch meetings and in the mess room.

POSITIVE RESULTS

Here at the ASLEF Education project we help ULRs to establish partnerships with local colleges and support them setting up courses. ULRs have worked hard to generate interest in these courses and it's clear there is a demand from rail workers for help in improving their IT skills. We have enabled partnerships between further education colleges, employers and trade unions to make these courses happen. We have to ensure there is a viable group of learners for the college, and provide the necessary hardware and software. The results have been really positive, with nearly 50 employees across the two depots enrolling on the courses.

The courses were set up to accommodate rail workers' complex shift patterns. A traditional course of two or three hours each



ASLEF is committed to lifelong learning for our members

week would not have worked because railwaymen and women can start very early and finish very late and have rest days during the week. Consequently, our course was specially designed as a drop-in workshop, where learners are able to work at their own pace and attend around their shift patterns.

Agreement was reached with Virgin Trains East Coast to allow learners from other train operating companies to use the computer facilities in their learning resource rooms. Additional laptops were provided by ASLEF Education.

FLEXIBLE ATTENDANCE

TUC Education provides tutors who are available one full day each week for 10 weeks. Attendance is flexible, allowing learners to drop in for one, two or three hours each week, depending on work commitments. Learners can complete all their work in the lesson or do some at home and email it to the tutor. We are offering Level 1 courses at King's Cross and Level 1 and 2 qualifications in Newcastle. The courses cover some of the Microsoft Office software including Word, Excel, Outlook, and PowerPoint. Learners also get the opportunity to learn about organising files, emailing and online security.

At King's Cross railworkers from VTEC have attended the courses along with workers from Southeastern and South West Trains. In Newcastle the courses have been attended by Arriva Trains Northern as well as VTEC employees. Feedback has been very positive with railworkers enjoying the opportunity to develop their IT skills.

Andy Saunders, an Arriva Trains North driver from Newcastle, said: 'I wanted to learn how to properly use the technology available to me and this union learning course has provided a great opportunity to do that at my

workplace.'

Doug Stafford, a train driver from VTEC, said: 'I was keen to increase my knowledge of computers and improve my skills,' and Darren Routledge, a VTEC driver and ULR, said: 'It has been very useful. I'm surprised how much there is to learn, including how to create documents, store and share files and photos, etc.'

Mick O'Shea, a VTEC driver and the ASLEF ULR at King's Cross, said: 'There has been huge interest in the IT courses at King's Cross. Increasingly we are seeing new technologies being introduced on the railways and some of our colleagues do not feel they are up to speed yet. Some colleagues have very good IT skills but we are providing support to those who feel they are being left behind a little.'

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Tracy Bartle, people development manager at VTEC, said: 'Virgin is a business that prides itself on developing its people. Here at Virgin Trains East Coast one of the many ways we do this is by working in partnership with ASLEF and the other trade unions to support union learning. A great example of this is the set up of IT courses at King's Cross and Newcastle. Helping people get to grips with technology is just one of the ways our ULRs can make a real difference for their colleagues.'

ASLEF Education has also been working with other providers in Birmingham, Derby and Leeds to provide IT courses for union members. Further courses are planned throughout 2016. For more information please visit the ASLEF Education pages at www.aslef.org.uk

Return of the one nation Tory



The new Prime Minister, Theresa May, says she wants to be a one nation Conservative.

GREGOR GALL examines what that means – and what it has meant – for working men and women in Britain since Benjamin Disraeli coined the phrase 170 years ago

FOR THE last 100 years, workers have been represented, however imperfectly, by Labour, and bosses by the Tories. Before that, before the Labour Party was founded by the trade unions, the Liberals laid claim to represent the workers by dint of being more politically progressive than the Tories.

Yet the *realpolitik* is a little more complicated and there has been a longstanding assertion by 'one nation' Tories that they can represent workers, too, simultaneously looking after the interests of both capital and labour.

This form of paternalism – as well as the political expression one nation – dates back to Benjamin Disraeli in the 19th century. As a young MP he wrote a novel called *Sybil, or The Two Nations*, published in 1845, the same year as *The Condition of the Working Class in England* by Friedrich Engels. Later, as Prime Minister from 1874-1880, he introduced some social and employment reforms that did benefit workers.

DOG EAT DOG

But if we are to get to the bottom of what one nation Toryism is really about we need to ask why he did this. Was it because of genuine – albeit limited – compassion for workers? Or was it because he was far-sighted enough to see reforms as necessary for the social stability needed to safeguard capitalism?

The enlargement of the franchise meant Disraeli needed the votes of workers to be in office so one part of the answer is *realpolitik*. But appealing to workers with an agenda of limited reform was also about understanding that social unrest – as a result of a growing divide between the two nations of rich and poor – is not conducive to the long-term interests of capitalism.

In other words, capitalists had to be regulated to protect capitalism because a 'dog eat dog' world could lead to the demise of all capitalists and, thus, of capitalism itself.

By contrast, the Liberals at this time were adherents of free trade and free enterprise – which meant letting the market rip. The Tory Party gradually dropped the one nation ideology and became more like the Liberals.

But the concept of one nation Conservatism came back in the 20th century,



Theresa May (above) says she wants to be a one nation Tory, like Harold Macmillan (far left) and Benjamin Disraeli (above), and unlike Margaret Thatcher (above left) and David Cameron (left)

most obviously after the Second World War, when the Tories under Prime Minister Harold Macmillan accepted the welfare state and nationalised industries created by the Labour governments of 1945-50 and 1950-51. The Tories then believed that schools and hospitals, in the public sector, were needed to provide healthy, educated workers for the factories and offices of British capitalism in the second half of the 20th century. They also understood that, in the first half of the century, the capitalists in the coal, steel and rail industries, among others, had shown themselves incapable of providing the country with the services it needed.

Margaret Thatcher put the nails in the coffin of this post-war settlement by declaring, in *Woman's Own*, 'there is no such thing as society'. Instead, there should, she thought, only be individuals competing against each other – something Disraeli warned against for reasons of self-interest. Consequently, she dismantled vast chunks of the welfare state and sold off the nationalised industries that belonged to us all.

THE NASTY PARTY

John Major's proclamation of a 'classless society' was patently untrue – he did nothing to resuscitate the practice of one nation Toryism and privatised British Rail.

More recently, in 2014, former Tory Party co-chair Grant Shapps tried to rebrand David Cameron's Conservatives as the workers' party because it was fast becoming known as the nasty party again – a phrase first coined by Theresa May at the Conservative Party conference in 2002. Deputy Tory Party chair Robert Halfon plugged the same line early last year before Cameron did the same at last year's party conference.

Unsurprisingly, there was no evidence of a Cameron turn to one nationism as his big society big idea was subterfuge for backdoor privatisation; the bedroom tax penalised the poor; and his slogan 'We are all in this together' couldn't disguise the fact that the rich got richer and the poor became poorer on his watch. His talk of 'opportunity for all' was all about encouraging individuals to compete against each other. It was, as *Guardian* commentator Owen Jones said at the time, a

'shameless lie', exemplified by claiming a slightly raised national minimum wage to be a 'living wage'.

Fast forward to today. With Theresa May, we have the return of the one nation Tory. Her seminal speech, on Monday 11 July, as a leadership contender, laid out its contemporary contours. She railed against elitism and inequality. She promised 'a vision of a country that works not for a privileged few but for every one of us' and said 'under my leadership, the Conservative Party will put itself... at the service of ordinary, working people'.

ATTACK ON LIVING STANDARDS

But, like Disraeli in the 19th century and Macmillan in the 20th, May is maintaining capitalism by means of class collaboration while Cameron, despite the rhetoric, maintained capitalism by class warfare. He allowed open season on workers' living standards to restore the profitability of big companies after the economic crash of 2008.

May wants workers to play a greater part in the running of companies – to make them more competitive. May wants workers to have a greater share in the prosperity they create – to support their own exploitation embodied by capitalism. And May wants companies better regulated – so what they do doesn't seem so unfair.

Even if one sounds nicer, and gentler, we should remember they are two means to the same end, namely, the slavery of workers to the pursuit of profit while the boss class benefits from the labour of the workers.

◉ Gregor Gall is Professor of Industrial Relations at the University of Bradford, Visiting Lecturer in International Labour and Trade Union Studies at Ruskin College, Oxford, and a visiting lecturer at the University of Hertfordshire. His research on the use of injunctions by employers in industrial disputes is published in the *British Journal of Industrial Relations* – a copy of which can be obtained by emailing g.gall@bradford.ac.uk

Daniel: I want to hear from you

Cambridge branch welcomed Daniel Zeichner, our local MP, to our August meeting. Daniel, a rare Labour Party success in East Anglia, thanked members for the invitation and ASLEF for its support of the Labour Party. Daniel was keen to understand the problems faced by train drivers and told the branch to get in touch direct with him. As part of the Shadow Transport team he only hears from chief executives who think everything is wonderful on the railway. He was amazed at the everyday problems drivers face and said Labour was fully committed to bringing the railway back into public ownership, fully committed to HS2,



Daniel Zeichner addresses the branch

and fully committed to Crossrail 2. He was concerned at delays with the Abellio Greater Anglia franchise and the uncertainty faced by staff and passengers while the figures are analysed again. He appreciated how much investment is needed in rolling stock, track and signalling upgrades and the problems encountered on public transport, particularly in Cambridge. His final

message to those present was, 'Please tell me what is going on at the grassroots level, your local MP wants to, and needs to, hear from you.' The branch would also like to pay its respects to retired driver John Curtis who has passed away at the age of 88. John was a well-respected member of the depot and our condolences go to Joan and her family at this sad time.

Martin Haylett,
branch secretary

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

RMS committee members Les Muir, Tony West, Ernie Whitfield and Alan Taylor attended the August meeting of Exeter branch with chair Jon Morton and branch secretary Ricky West. Ryan Howe gave a very good district council report, and the drivers' district council report was eloquently given by Derek Billings with many questions from the floor. Tony West presented a 45 year badge to Andy Snowdon and a 10 year badge to Steve Wade. Retired member Richard Westlake gave a report on proposed transport policy changes in the West Country and announced he was stepping down as a local Labour councillor after serving for 30 years. Les Muir gave a very good presentation on the work of the RMS and the NPC.

Alan Taylor, RMS

Badges and beer



Senior driving instructor Larry Williams proudly displays his 25 year badge

Wimbledon branch invited DO1 Graham Morris to present long service medals after our monthly meeting in July. There was lots of support for the 37 receiving medals, and those who aspire to follow in their footsteps, including Dave Spring (35) and Paul James (30), seven drivers who completed 25 years, two on 20, nine on 15, nine on 10, and eight completing 5. Graham thanked them for their hard work and dedication and support for the union over the years.

Larry Williams

Upcoming events

CRICKLEWOOD – FRIDAY 30 SEPTEMBER

Reunion from 12.0 at the Royal Air Forces Association Club, Ashburnham Road, Bedford.

FRATTON – FRIDAY 30 SEPTEMBER

Reunion from 12.0 to 18.00 at Portsmouth Railway Social Club next to Fratton station. Bring photos of railway interest. Free buffet and raffle. Call Gary White on 07798 706204.

RAINHAM – THURSDAY 6 OCTOBER

Southeastern retired and working members' reunion from 11.0 at Rainham Social Club, 86 Station Road, Rainham.

PETERBOROUGH – FRIDAY 7 OCTOBER

Booz'n'Chat meeting at the Parkway club, Maskew Avenue, Peterborough. £5 in advance, £6 on the door. Call Malcolm Bell on 07884 43242 or fletton.brick@btopenworld.com

Please send your all branch news, reports and photographs to journal@aslef.org.uk

Send-off he deserved

A well-attended branch in July had a visit from WRC D3 rep Julie Clegg-Haver who put us in the picture about equalities, and Pride, and thanked us for our support. After much discussion about local freight issues, the meeting ended with a retirement presentation by chair Dave Evans to Alan Pickford who has been on the railway for more than 20 years, 14½ of them on the footplate. He is going earlier than he'd hoped and will be missed by



Good luck, Alan

everyone. A buffet and drinks followed to give Alan the send-off he deserved.

Paul Costello, Buxton & Peak Forest



RMS TO SELHURST

Our sincere thanks for the kind invitation to Selhurst branch on 20 July, where excellent reports were given by Angela O'Sullivan about the Women's Representatives Committee, Dave MacLennan (who was presented with his 15 year service award) on district council and Dan King on local level. Les Muir gave an up to date report on the work of the RMS, and our future plans, while Alan Taylor spoke about the National Pensioners' Convention and the RMS 500 club.

Tony West, RMS committee

Dug by hand like Brunel

After our previous branch was dominated by developments at DB Cargo, and other freight operators, our last meeting was attended by company council rep Howard Rugg and District Secretary Brian Corbett who gave us a full report on non-developments at GWR. After ten years of GWR being one company covering the whole of the former Western Region terms, conditions and pay all remain separate and different. It was reported that no progress has been achieved, with management quite happy to operate the three sections of its day to day business under separate sets of t&cs. Progress on electrifying the main route to Bristol and Cardiff has been slow, with only one very short isolated section in the Thames Valley completed, and the whole thing three years behind schedule. It was reported that, in places, the upright support holes are being dug by hand in true Brunelian fashion! The new express trains will have large under floor diesel engines to get them through the long wait for electrification, which sort of makes them a high speed sprinter with a pan on the roof. Bro Steve Davies, who served on the Wessex drivers' divisional council for many years, received his 45 year service badge and Bro Steve Clements, our resident badge and route map designer, his 35 year badge. Ex-Westbury drivers Ted Stretton, Fred Tucker and Jimmy Thomas have passed away; our condolences go out to their families.

Dave Griffiths, branch secretary

On the road

District 6 took to the road on 21 and 22 June to the far reaches of our district at Aberystwyth. Glenn Latham from Machynlleth depot hosted us; we were looking forward to some good Welsh hospitality and we weren't disappointed. Whilst some of us were waiting for others to arrive we took up residence in the Spoons on the concourse of Aberystwyth station and joined in a

debate organised by students at the university on the in/out referendum. The following morning our regular meeting was held at the Aberystwyth Railway Club. Our EC member Dave Calfe gave us an update on the Southern dispute and other topics from head office. DO Dicky Fisher was on hand to update us on matters relating to our TOCs including the East Midlands pay deal which includes

bringing Sundays into the working week. A buffet was supplied by the club and we all enjoyed the hospitality from our hosts Lawrence and Mair. Our journey back from deepest Wales was not without incident when a bridge strike between Machynlleth and

Newtown meant most of us travelling by bus between those two points while some of the party decided to sit it out at a local hostelry and follow on when services resumed later in the day!

Martin Bromage-Griffiths, District 6 chair



Well over 100 retired drivers, guards, maintenance and active staff attended the Old Oak Common retired members' reunion on 14 June and had a great day.

Presentations were made to Phil Meakin, Jagdeep Mahli and, belatedly, Geoff Walker. Many thanks to Paddington branch and all who support this event.

Mark Urpeth



OFF TO OZ

Three Bridges wishes all the best in retirement to Steve White and Dave Kington. Steve has been a loyal member for over 40 years, starting on the railway in 1974 at Redhill (where his dad was a steam driver) as a traction trainee. Steve, a great character, moved to Three Bridges in 1998. Dave, who started here, has been a member for over 15 years and is moving to pastures new by emigrating to Australia. Presentations were made at our meeting, attended by many friends from the railway, and we would like to wish them both all the best in the future.

Paul Eden, branch secretary



EC vice-president Dave Calfe and DO6 Dicky Fisher in Aberystwyth



Mick Holder turns back time to September 1916

The War Levy, profiteers, and the Battle of the Somme were all topics in the *Journal* 100 years ago

WHEN WAR SHALL BE WAGED

'The British offensive in France has brought in its train a serious drain on our War Levy Fund, for a very large number of claims has been made on behalf of our soldier members since it began. Is it too much to hope that when it is over the common people will take a hand in saying when war shall be waged, or will the lessons now being so bitterly learnt be forgotten immediately the present horror is ended? The people of Europe can say, if they will, there shall be no more such halocausts [sic]. Will they be wise and say it, or will they again leave it to the governing classes to set people at each others' throats?'

NATION'S PROFITEERS

'The cost of living shows no sign of coming down, in spite of all protests from the trade unions against the exploiter being permitted to continue his nefarious work. We should not complain were it for the fortune of war only that caused soaring prices, but when we know the greater part is caused by the undue profits being made by the nation's profiteers out of the nation's agony we feel protest is necessary.'

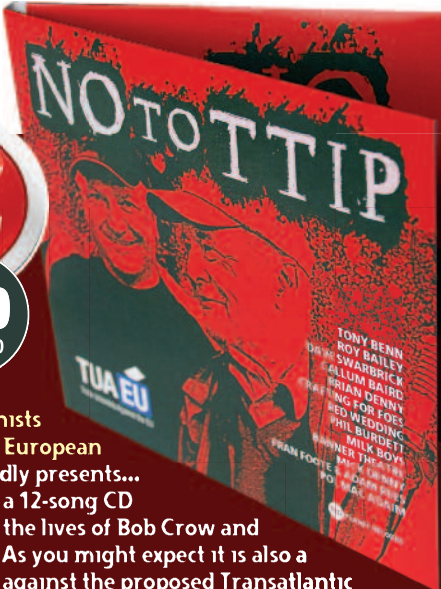
BATTLE OF THE SOMME

JRR writes: 'I sat two hours intensely interested in the progress of the Battle of the Somme, that "big push" which began on the morning of 1 July and has not ceased yet. It was strange to sit there in an armchair and see within a few feet gallant young fellows shot down by invisible bullets and stretched out dead or dying. Such an experience sets one deeply thinking. Here one has a faithful unvarnished record in pictures of what actually happened in France in 1916. Imagine this film reproduced to the next generation! What will they think of it?'

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BURSTON STRIKE SCHOOL RALLY

Sunday 4 September 2016
10.45am - 4pm * Crown Green, Burston, near Diss, Norfolk IP22 5TP

Guest Speakers
am: **MICK WHELAN**
ASLEF General Secretary
pm: **LIZ SNAPE**
TUC President
JOHN McDONNELL MP
Shadow Chancellor

Chaired by
MEGAN DOBNEY
TUC Regional Secretary
CLIVE LEWIS MP

Entertainment
Attila The Stockbroker
Red Flags
NASUWT Brass Band
Banner Theatre 1st May Band
Steve White and The Protest Family



Suffolk Punch horses will lead the parade

Food and Beer Tent * Campaign and Community Stalls

Organised by Gwent E.M.E. Region with the support of SERTUC, The Burston Strike School Teachers and Thompsons Solicitors

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The TUC in London, the South East and Eastern Region

THOMPSONS SOLICITORS

unite the UNION

DARE DEVIL RIDES TO JARAMA

A new play by
Neil Gore



*'To you we speak, you numberless Englishmen,
To remind you of the greatness still among you
Created by these men who go from our towns
To fight for peace, for liberty, and for you.'*

Clem Beckett and Christopher Caudwell were two such men. Moved by most Spaniards' determination to defend themselves against Franco, Hitler and Mussolini, they crossed the Pyrenees to fight for democracy and against Fascism in Spain. Clem 'Dare Devil' Beckett, the rugged speedway star, and Christopher Caudwell, poet and literary critic, were unlikely friends; but a common cause brought them together and they fought and died at a machinegun post covering their battalion's retreat at the Battle of Jarama in 1937.

Commissioned by the International Brigades Memorial Trust, **Dare Devil Rides to Jarama** tells the story of the British and Irish volunteers in the brutal Civil War in Spain, capturing the idealistic hopes and dreams, raw passions, fear and anger in a powerful new drama which features stirring songs, poetry and flamenco dance.



AUTUMN TOUR DATES

- 24 September **The Place, Bedford** (01234 354321; www.theplacebedford.org.uk)
- 26 September-1 October **Harrogate Theatre** (01423 502116; boxoffice@harrogatetheatre.co.uk)
- 4 October **Loganlea Miners' Welfare** (01501 763354)
- 5 October **North Edinburgh Arts** (0131 315 2151)
- 6-7 October **Lowry, Salford** (0843 208 6000)
- 8 October **Waterside Theatre, Aylesbury** (0844 871 7607)
- 11 October **Guildhall, Derby** (01332 255800; boxoffice@derby.gov.uk)
- 12-15 October **Oldham Coliseum** (0161 624 2829; www.coliseum.org.uk)
- 18 October **Quorn Grange Hotel, Quorn, Leicestershire** (01509 412167)
- 19 October **Peterborough Trades Council** (venue tbc)
- 20 October **Chilwell Arts Centre, Beeston** (07861 308044)
- 21 October **Lansdown Hall, Stroud** (01453 760900)
- 22 October **The Seagull, Lowestoft** (01502 589726; www.theseagull.co.uk)
- 24-29 October **The Bussey Building, Peckham** (07949 635910)
- 30 October **Marx Memorial Library, London** (0207 253 1485)
- 1 November **Hertford Theatre** (01992 531500; www.hertfordtheatre.com)
- 2 November **Wedgwood Rooms, Southsea** (02392 863911)
- 3 November **Plough Arts Centre, Great Torrington** (01805 624624; www.theploughartscentre.org.uk)
- 4 November **Dorchester Arts Centre** (01305 266926; www.dorchesterarts.org.uk)
- 5 November **Bridport Arts Centre** (01308 424204; www.bridport-arts.com)
- 7 November **Theatre Royal, Margate** (01843 292795; boxoffice@margatewintergarden.co.uk)
- 10 November **The Civic, Barnsley** (01226 327000)
- 11 November **Withal Hall, Barnard Castle**
- 12 November **Cast, Doncaster** (01302 303 959; castindoncaster.com)
- 13 November **Severn Theatre, Shrewsbury** (01743 281281; www.theatresevern.co.uk)
- 14-19 November **Lantern Theatre, Sheffield** (0114 255 1776; www.lanterntheatre.org.uk)
- 22-23 November **St Michael's Irish Centre, Liverpool** (0151 263 1808; www.stmichaelsirishcentre.org)
- 24-26 November **Yorkshire rural touring scheme** (venues tbc)
- 30 November **The Place, Bedford** (01234 718112; www.theplacebedford.org.uk)
- 1 December **Square Chapel, Halifax** (01422 349422; www.squarechapel.co.uk)
- 2 December **The Hat Factory, Luton** (01582 878100)
- 3 December **Ruskin College, Oxford** (01865 759600; www.ruskin.ac.uk)

MICK HAYWARD TRUE GENTLEMAN

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you of the unexpected death in April of our friend and colleague Michael (Mick) Hayward at the age of 57. Mick followed in his father's footsteps – Bernie Hayward was well-known to many, having a long career on the Underground – and Mick started working for London Transport, as it was known then, in 1977 as a station guard, making his way up the ranks from panel shunter to road trainer/driver on the Piccadilly line. He then applied as a driver for the Metropolitan line before joining the engineers train unit as an engineers train driver on the marshalling link, and then as a night ETO. He was well-liked and known as a true gentleman; to which the excellent turn-out at his funeral was a testament. Mick leaves behind a wife, Teresa, four children, and grandchildren, and will be sorely missed.

Christopher Robey



Mick – from station guard to ETO

GRAHAM EVANS SCRAP IRON

I have just received confirmation from his brother Clive that ex-Fishguard Goodwick, Swindon and Bath Road driver Graham 'Scrap Iron' Evans passed away in July 2015 after a brave fight against bladder cancer. He was 79. Graham was a Western man, beginning his career at Goodwick shed, 87J, at Fishguard in 1951. He was promoted to fireman and moved to Swindon in 1954. He did national service, like many of his generation, from 1954 to 1957. In 1960 Graham moved back to Goodwick in West Wales where he worked until 1963 when he was made redundant,



Any old iron? Graham with the Class 56 locomotive Castell Ogwr/Ogmore Castle

because of the brutal Beeching closures, and moved to Bristol Bath Road. He was promoted to driver in 1978 and progressed up through the links until he retired in the mid-1990s. Graham's nickname of Scrap Iron was well earned. He had a great talent for fixing mechanical things and all sorts of other devices. He could mend anything from cars to washing machines and, later, turned his hand to television sets! He spent much of his spare time combing scrap yards for spare parts to fix whatever he was currently working on. Graham, who moved back to Fishguard after he retired, is much missed by Clive, family, friends and former work mates.
Bernard Kennedy, Bristol branch secretary

the house was not tidy enough but, as soon as Vic came in, he put her at ease, which I knew he would. Vic never stood on ceremony because that was the kind of person he was.

Vic was an active member of the Labour Party. He was assistant treasurer of the Constituency Labour Party and organised the Hundred Club (we had 100 members who would pay £1 a week) and, by heck, he made sure people paid up, and helped raise thousands of pounds for our CLP.

Vic was affectionately known as one of the Railway Children, along with his two fellow ward councillors, and ASLEF members, Chris Llewellyn and Horace Bishop. He was also one of the Apostles, from the Gospels, along with Matty Daley (Matthew); Mark Curry (Mark); and Horace Bishop (John). Vic was Luke. Because they were all active members of the same union branch, and represented the same ward, which I suspect is unique in ASLEF.

Vic was born in West Hartlepool in 1928 and lived in the town all his life, along with his wife Violet, daughters Susan and Valerie and sons Stephen and Geoff (who is also an active member of ASLEF). He never forgot his roots and was a real man of the people.

Carl Richardson, Hartlepool council

Ivor John Pett

13th May 1930 - 18th May 2016



Ivor's father was a driver, too

IVOR PETT MODEL RAILWAYMAN

Ivor Pett passed away on 18 May. He was 86. Ivor came from a railway family; his father Ted was also a driver. Ivor was a Western man serving all his career at St Philip's Marsh and Bath Road depots. Like many of his generation, he returned to the railway after doing his national service. Ivor was a bit of a loner, preferring his own company. He became an accomplished engineer, making many different types of railway models. He had his own workshop set up in a bedroom at his bungalow in Whitchurch. It was equipped with lathes and lots of other tools to make models. He was also an enthusiastic cyclist and went everywhere round Bristol on his bike.

Bernard Kennedy, Bristol

VIC BURTON ONE OF THE APOSTLES

Further to Geoff Burton's obituary (*Journal*, August) I knew Vic from 1979 when he became a councillor for the ward where I was the local Labour Party secretary. He was a genuine councillor who cared about people; also a committed trade unionist and a proud and loyal member of ASLEF. Vic was also a family friend, having worked on the railways for nearly 50 years; he knew my father, who had also been on the railways a very long time, and they used to drink together at the Labour Club in Hartlepool, so there was an affinity between us. Vic was on Hartlepool borough council from 1979 to 1999, serving as chair of the housing committee; he was also on Cleveland county council from 1981 to 1989, serving as chair of the further education committee from 1985. As a district councillor and county councillor he served the area for 20 years. He



Vic and Violet in the chains of office

was mayor in 1992/93 and made an alderman in 2001.

As a councillor he would, as he put it, 'walk the ward'. He lived in the ward he represented and no one could say, as far as Vic was concerned, that they only saw their councillor at election time because he would walk round the ward on a regular basis. I remember on one occasion he went to see my granny with his mayoral chains on. I told her, 'The mayor is coming to see you', and she was in a panic and thought

NEIL ANDERSON JOVIAL MAN

Neil Anderson sadly passed away recently after a short illness. He was 86. Neil and Florence came to live at Three Bridges from Edinburgh after the Beeching cuts. Neil first went to Epsom Downs then Coulsdon North, Selhurst and, finally, Three Bridges. Neil retired in 1995. He was always a pleasant and jovial person to be with, and a keen branch member.

Dave Shopland, RMS

We welcome letters, either by email to journal@aslef.org.uk or by Royal Mail to **ASLEF Journal at 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN**. The writer of our star letter wins a rich range of ASLEF regalia.

Stirring up a hornets' nest

I don't know whether Arno Brooks intended to disturb a hornets' nest (*Journal*, May) but, if he did, he certainly succeeded. Perhaps I can pour some oil on troubled waters because there are two sides to every story. Throughout my years on the footplate I considered myself a professional railwayman but I had a family, friends, and interests away from the railway. Consequently, when I reached that certain age, five years ago, I grabbed retirement with both arms, walked away and didn't look back. One stage, which I treasured, was closed and another was starting. I now fill my time with my wonderful family and various hobbies as well as voluntary work. I am one of the lucky ones. I should add I went because I found it increasingly difficult not to tell modern management (or mismanagement) what I thought of them and what they are doing to our industry.

However, I know colleagues who do not have a close family, whose friends are all at work, and who have no interests outside the job. When they retire they lose the only life and family they have known. Can you imagine what that feels like? They therefore grab every opportunity to go back to that life, even if it means working on a zero hours contract, which I abhor as much as the next man. This is obviously a very emotive subject but, before you condemn individuals out of hand, consider why they are doing what they do, and have a little understanding.

Preserved railways are not used solely by 'puffer nutters'. The vast majority of passengers are families and schools and they contribute an invaluable service by showing youngsters what life was like years ago, both in terms of the trains themselves and society in general.

As for those colleagues who continue on the footplate past 65, I don't understand why someone in their 60s would choose to continue to get up at 0300 or still be working at 0100, either, as there's a big world out there and, yes, they are blocking youngsters from starting a career. But, again, perhaps they have serious reasons for doing so and it's not for me to judge them.

When I was still driving, I remember having many West Coast drivers in my cab, route learning, etc, and found most of them interesting and good company so to hear that individuals and company council reps refuse them in the cab makes me very sad. After all, we do, or did, the same job, albeit under different contracts and conditions.

ACT NOW OR FREIGHT WILL GO THE WAY OF THE DODO

Uncertainty surrounding the steel industry is just the latest blow for ASLEF members working in the freight sector, a business that has become increasingly regressive, concentrating on intermodal and bulk/core flows based on what's left of heavy manufacturing.

As heavy industry faces more downsizing – or extinction, in the case of coal – what happens now? As the general secretary stated, in a recent edition of the *Journal*, it's time for politicians to take

positive action to support the rail freight industry and get freight back on rail, either by design or policy. Mail, parcels, wagon load, less than full train load, trip and yard workings, oil trains – these have either gone, or exist in a few marginal flows.

The infrastructure that used to support this – freight yards, depots, sidings, terminals and, crucially, staff – have largely disappeared, too. Swathes of the UK are effectively a rail freight desert and locations which used to produce

substantial traffic from South Wales to the north-east of England have been reduced to a few core flows. Yet any major road features a constant stream of lorries and HGVs adjacent to a railway with little or no freight on it.

Pathing rail freight on an increasingly busy passenger network is another obstacle.

Action is needed, otherwise freight on rail will go the way of the dodo.

JP Morgan, Ipswich, Suffolk

Finally, if Arno Brooks wrote with the intention of getting a reaction, then you have played right into his hands, so please take this advice from an 'old git' like me; shake your head, walk away and concentrate on trying, with ASLEF, to bring our railway back to the state in which it will benefit everyone.

Steve le Tissier

D train to disaster

I agree with Bro Ross Hamilton (*Journal*, August). More than 30 years ago, people in London decided to inflict Pacer units on the northern railway network, while hundreds of expensive trains proliferated all over London and the south-east.

Now people in London say we need another low cost stop gap. We should not put up with this; we pay our taxes in the north as well. These cheap, nasty D-trains scraped through crashworthiness on grandfather rights. It's OK to inflict them on the north because they don't collapse when hit by a big water bottle?

Get real! Hit them with a real train (even a Pacer) or HGV on a level crossing and the result will be very different.

John Clark, Darlington

Dangerous new signals

Just had my Cardiff briefing about the new signals coming in at the end of December. There are two calling on signals being installed. In the briefing we were told there have already been three SPADs at Reading involving this type of signal and it even said, in

big red writing, these are high risk signals. So why are Network Rail allowed to install brand new signals that are high risk? Why don't all the TOCs who use Cardiff, as well as ASLEF and the RMT, say to Network Rail these signals are dangerous and demand they be removed before the inevitable happens and another poor driver has a SPAD?

Mark Couchman, Paddington HSS driver

Spinning for big pharma

Owen Smith, who is challenging Jeremy Corbyn for the Labour Party leadership, claims to be a radical, from the left of the party, seeking unity, but his record needs scrutiny. He supports Trident which, in the words of Tony Benn, makes our food banks the 'best protected in the world'.

He had the chance to vote against the Tory austerity cuts to welfare, but lamely abstained. Perhaps his move from a Labour Party job to be a PR for the giant drugs firm Pfizer is the real giveaway. Odd move for a socialist, especially since Pfizer actively supports the privatisation of our NHS. The company also gifted £53k to Progress, which promotes right-wing market-friendly Blairite policies.

Owen Smith's record suggests he is neither a socialist nor a radical. In contrast the honourable and principled politics of Jeremy Corbyn, whose position has rattled the establishment, both inside and outside Labour, makes voting for a Labour leader a no-brainer.

John Metcalfe, Carlisle

Here in cloud cuckoo land

I am appalled at the naivety of my trade union, and the majority of union leaders, and the Labour leadership, during the EU referendum. The TU movement seemed split on the EU question of how leaving would impact on members, and that is understandable, but what seems to be forgotten is that we have to have a Labour government to have any chance of fulfilling our ideals.

ASLEF's main reason is the nationalisation of rail. A perfectly rational ambition, but not achievable without Labour in power. Was that worth our stance without taking in the economic impact leaving will have on our children? Believe me, what is happening now is nothing to what is around the corner after Brexit. It's not about how many euros or dollars you get for your pound, it's about negative equity, interest rates, inflation, and access to free trade agreements without the free movement of capital and labour. And if you think you can have one without the other then you are living in cloud cuckoo land.

Labour is in turmoil. Jeremy's economic message is sound, but what else is? His policy on Trident is appalling and against party policy. We have lost Scotland to the SNP, millions of our supporters are turning to UKIP, for Christ's sake, and before a general election the reduction in MPs to 600 will hurt Labour more than the Conservatives.

I'm a lifelong Labour man. Nye Bevan, Michael Foot and Tony Benn are my heroes. But I am also a democrat. I realised long ago that the majority of my fellow countrymen/women did not support all my ambitions and if I wanted to achieve any of them I had to make compromises, for without power we can achieve nothing. So I say to my union and, to the union movement in general, take a long look in the mirror, or you will be marching behind the same banners I have for most of my life, feeling good about what you stand for but not making an iota of difference.

Len Worboys, RMS, 63 years in ASLEF

Keep left and Jez we will

Since Jeremy Corbyn was elected I have rejoined the party and seen a tremendous wave of respect and affection towards Jeremy from ASLEF members and ordinary working people. Despite having a PLP dominated by careerist MPs he has done an excellent job and is very capable of winning a general election for Labour. I attended and spoke at a Keep Corbyn rally in Hull attended by more than 500 people. The overwhelming mood is to keep Jeremy. The current situation highlights how important it will be in the future to get more working-class MPs even if that means deselecting those who ignore their trade union and party members. I know Mick has given full support to Jeremy and I would very much like this to continue with Jeremy staying as leader of our party.

Gary Wareing, Hull 104 branch

Our future in the balance

Thank you for the support you have shown to Jeremy Corbyn in the face of the appalling ongoing coup attempt by the right of the PLP. It is absolutely disgraceful that with the future of our country in the balance, a worrying rise in racist attacks, and the Tories weaker than they have been for a decade, many MPs turned their fire on their leader, democratically elected just ten months ago.

Ian Townson, Battersea CLP

Sky's the limit

I'd like to commend Mick Whelan for the comments he made on Sky News and for your support for Jeremy Corbyn. Those wishing to oust Mr Corbyn are not displaying leadership qualities or, indeed, a united front.

Laura Collings

Don't spoil the party

Please do not destroy the Labour Party with your support of Mr Corbyn. I have voted Labour all my life although, sometimes, this has been difficult. This country needs a strong Labour Party which plainly is not going to happen under Mr Corbyn.

Bob Morse

A guard on every train

As you know, South West Trains has a guard on every train and returns the highest premium to the government. If Stagecoach/SWT can do it, then so can Southern. Questions should be asked – how come they can do it but not a foreign-owned company?

Kris Jendesen, Salisbury

Nicky, Pauline & Tosh

I am writing to express my gratitude to Nicky Whitehead, Pauline Cawood and Tosh McDonald for securing me a satisfactory package for finishing on ill health as a driver at Northern Rail. I started at Leeds in 1991 when Nicky and Tosh were still drivers and very much value their comradeship. I will miss the banter and friendship of drivers but will remain a member of ASLEF as part of the RMS.

JS Donlon, Wakefield, West Yorkshire

Thank you, Thompson's

I want to thank ASLEF and Thompson's solicitors. The advice I received about sorting out the complications over the death of my father, who did not leave a will, was invaluable to me and my family. It is very hard to please every member of ASLEF, but the important thing to remember is that, as a member, there are invaluable services such as Thompson's available, and it is reassuring to know they are there when needed.

Edward Pearce, Marylebone



GLASGOW branch 125 year celebration badge. £4 including p&p. Contact ASLEF's Glasgow branch secretary John McCue at johnmccue1970@msn.com



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Two pints of lager and a packet of crisps, please

Well, it's late September and I really should be back at school. So **KEITH RICHMOND** looks at some of the books that have dropped on the **ASLEF Journal** desk this summer

WHEN the Speaker of the House of Commons shouted, 'Order! Order!' George Brown, Labour's old school Gaitskillite deputy leader, is said to have shouted back, 'One large whisky, two pints of bitter, and a packet of crisps, please.' But then this was the man who, after announcing his resignation from the Labour Party in 1976, promptly fell over in the gutter, prompting *The Times* to declare, 'George Brown drunk is a better man than the Prime Minister [Harold Wilson] sober.'

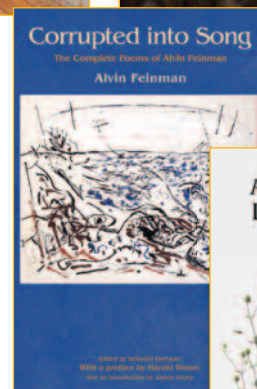
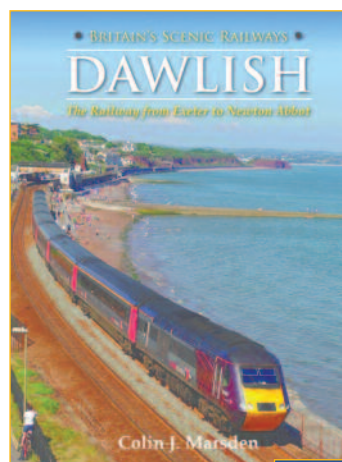
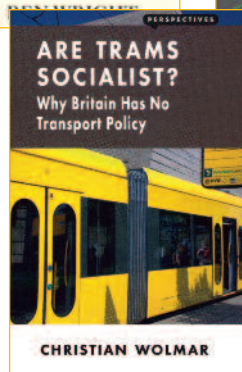
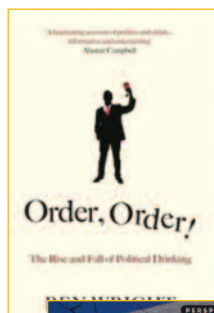
Order, Order! by Ben Wright (Duckworth, £16.99) is a history of political drinking, a guzzler's guide to governing while, to use the *Private Eye* euphemism, 'tired and emotional'. Damian McBride, Gordon Brown's spin doctor, says he and his boss used to get so drunk in 11 Downing Street that they would hammer on the walls and shout at Tony Blair next door in Number 10, 'When are you going to f*** off?'

And Bernard Ingham, Margaret Thatcher's *spinmeister*, recalls Denis Thatcher's in-flight drinks itinerary: 'An opener, a brightener, a lifter, a tincture, a large gin and tonic without the tonic, a snifter, a snorter, a snorterino. Which more or less emptied the bottle.'

‘Books do furnish a room.’ – **Anthony Powell, *A Dance to the Music of Time***

The railway line from Exeter to Plymouth, particularly the part where it drops down from the county town towards Newton Abbot and Totnes, is one of the most spectacularly beautiful in Britain. The stretch which runs along the coast from Starcross, just across the River Exe from Exmouth, down through Dawlish and Dawlish Warren to Teignmouth, is famously pretty, if susceptible to the waves and, from time to time, breaches of the sea wall. In *Dawlish: The Railway from Exeter to Newton Abbot* (Ian Allan, £22.50) Colin Marsden, who lives at Dawlish, and loves the railway, offers a colourful photographic record of this glorious route.

The line was built, in 1845, by Brunel, the subject of a new biography by Colin Maggs. *Isambard Kingdom Brunel: The Life of an Engineering Genius* (Amberley, £20) is a comprehensive – warts and all – account of the great engineer's strengths and weaknesses, triumphs and disasters. Characteristic of the man is the story Maggs tells about the Exeter to Newton Abbot section of the South Devon atmospheric railway; Brunel initially thought that 13 inch iron pipes would be adequate but, after 4,400 tons of



Ben Wright, Colin Marsden, Colin Maggs, Christian Wolmar, Seema Sharma, Alvin Feinstein and Linda France on the write lines this summer

pipes had been delivered, decided that 15 inch pipes would be better...

Margaret Thatcher once said that a man who, beyond the age of 26, finds himself on a bus can count himself a failure. But then Mrs Thatcher, as well as being an inveterate snob, said many things that were simply not true. She didn't like trams, either, because they were too socialist – well, popular in the Eastern bloc – which is why Christian Wolmar rather dryly calls his new book *Are Trams Socialist? Why Britain Has No Transport Policy* (London Publishing Partnership, £8.99). Wolmar is extremely knowledgeable about the rail industry – even those on the other side of any argument he has concede he really knows his stuff – and he writes like a dream. This book – more of a polemic, really – is his plea not just for a vertically integrated railway, but for a properly integrated transport policy, in Britain.

‘I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library.’ – **Jorge Luis Borges**

The importance of transport, especially rail, in the forging of a modern state is highlighted in *India Junction: A Window to the Nation* (Rainlight, £8), a collection of essays, edited by Seema Sharma, on the role that rail has played in the development of the country. Mark Tully ('Without the railways the state created by the Raj could not have come into existence'); Sharmila Kantha ('Indian Railways is rightly described as the lifeline of the nation') and Ian Kerr ('No railways, no India'), among others,

provide us with the sights and the sounds, as well as the analysis, of the development of rail on the sub-continent.

‘Outside of a dog, a book is a man's best friend. Inside of a dog it's too dark to read.’ – **Groucho Marx**

'The best of Alvin Feinstein's poetry is as good as anything by a 20th century American,' reckons the great American critic Harold Bloom. That may be overselling him – and the two were friends – but Feinstein has been unjustly neglected, something the publication of *Corrupted into Song: The Complete Poems* (Princeton University Press, £14.95) might be about to put right. Because he writes, with astonishing precision, of 'The miraculously turned margin of our lives' and 'the fig-tree's / Sudden, rounded fingers'; of how 'memory only / Gathered to a shade in the sun-sorrowed square' and 'only / jackbird sulks in his tree / the fire of his silence in me.'

In *Through the Turnstile Gate*, the last poem in her thoughtful new collection, *Reading the Flowers* (Arc Publications, £8.99), Linda France asks plaintively, 'Who's to say / on which side of the gate the dream begins?' Who, indeed? 'At the end of November snow fell, / snow like no one had seen before; / an Eden lost while the sky slept. // The old tree couldn't bear the weight / of its white coverlet, creaking till its trunk / and branches split, exposed the chilled bones / of a dying year.'

HELP ME IF YOU CAN

I'M A retired British Transport Police officer from Bangor, North Wales, and secretary of the British Transport History Group. I recently co-wrote a book with Michael Layton, retired BTP, West Midlands Police and Sovereign Bases Police, Cyprus, called *Police Dog Heroes*.

Mike has co-written two other books, *Tracking the Hooligans*, a history of football violence on the UK rail network, with Alan Pacey, and *Hunting the Hooligans*, with Robert Endeacott, about the Birmingham City fans known as the Zulus. Mike and I are now in the



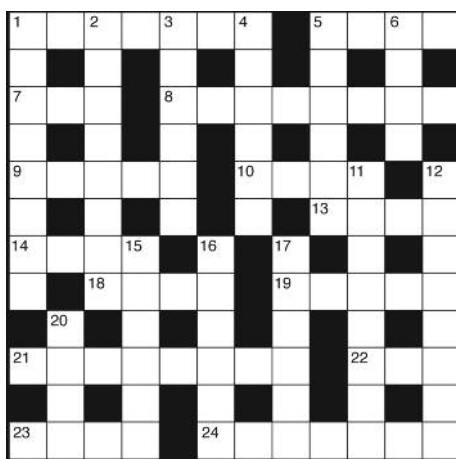
process of writing a sequel to *Tracking the Hooligans* called *The Hooligans are Still Amongst Us*.

I wonder if any ASLEF members have any recollections about dealing with football hooligans, particularly within the last three years, or, if not, at any other time, that they may wish to share with us. We are particularly interested in sectarian incidents in Scotland and racist attacks.

Of course, full recognition will be given to ASLEF union members should they wish to assist us, or a *nom de plume* can be used if they prefer to remain anonymous. You can contact me via email at Bill.valley@talktalk.net

Many thanks in anticipation of your kind and valued assistance.
Bill Rogerson

Prize Crossword 125 by Tom Williams



Solution to Crossword 124

Across: 1 Barrel 4 Japan 7 Secondhand 8 Boil 9 Eagle 11 Dessert 13 Diagram 15 Chaos 17 Slit 18 Discipline 20 Tense 21 Robber

Down: 1 Boobed 2 Reel 3 Leopard 4 Judge 5 Pea 6 Nudge 7 Siesta 10 Gargle 12 Tiddler 14 Mother 15 Cadet 16 Spice 17 Snub 19 Sin

Congratulations to **Derek Kent** of **Holmes Chapel, Crewe, Cheshire**, who was last month's winner. The winner of this month's Prize Crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25



○ You can see more of Tom Williams's crosswords, word games and puzzles at wordgames.co.uk

Across

1 Brilliant red
5 Open air recreation area
7 Tear roughly
8 Forefather
9 Precise
10 A great deal
13 Unit of land area
14 Collection of stacked tables
18 Every one individually
19 A lift for heavy goods
21 Domestically-made beer (4, 4)
22 Jeer
23 Small brown songbird
24 Crop-gathering season

Down

1 A rank of police officer
2 Handclapping
3 A shed adjoining a wall (4, 2)
4 Football challenge
5 Spanish coin
6 Section within a house
11 Write messily
12 Dark red pickling vegetable
15 Inn
16 Place of public worship
17 A bathroom spray
20 Sixty minutes

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Thanks for all your responses to the 124th prize crossword in the August edition of the ASLEF Journal. If you successfully complete this month's crossword please send the solution to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 77 St John Street, Clerkenwell, London, EC1M 4NN by 14 September

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If you are being harassed at work, bullied or discriminated against, and if your local, branch or district rep is unavailable, call the industrial relations department at union headquarters (020 7324 2400) or email info@aslef.org.uk. If you are arrested or interviewed by police and need legal assistance – day or night – call the members' emergency hotline on 0800 587 7530. ASLEF also provides first class legal advice free for members and dependents.



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